

Class 518 Commencement Speech

Good afternoon everyone, my name is Marshal Thien Dang, and it is a great pleasure to be up here speaking to you all on behalf of Class 518.

On November 9, 2018 we entered the world of law enforcement. The Judicial Marshal Academy was academically, physically, and mentally challenging for us all. For many of us, including myself, I thought that the best way to complete this journey was to keep my head down and fly under the radar. I was wrong.

Here at the Judicial Marshal Academy there is no such thing as being on your own. I, as well as others, soon learned that that is not the right approach here or in life. With the amount of diversity, age, and cultural backgrounds that make up Class 518, I am fortunate to have worked with each and every one of you.

About four weeks in as a class we finally came together, learned from each other, and absolutely without a doubt supported each other when our first tough task was given to us – training for our Commercial Driver's License. We completed multiple general knowledge testing at the DMV, a pre-trip inspection, which is a very lengthy script to remember, about 13 pages in length, and a parking/road examination. We did it and overcame the challenge with consistent support from one another by finding online exams for practice, booklets, etc. Another noteworthy moment during the academy was when we were introduced to our combat training known as LOCKUP, which stands for Law Officers Combat Kinetics Unarmed Panoply. This was something that was difficult for many of us, and as a class we took it very seriously, as it directly correlated to our individual safety, each other's safety, and our ability to protect the public. Many times after hours of training and rolling around in LOCKUP as well as during breaks for water and the lavatories, we as a class continued to work on our form and technique. I

remember when one of our Lieutenants gathered us around and stated how impressed he was and proud that we took our training seriously. Every time we saw each other lacking in a certain area you could count on one or more of us picking each other up. Class 518 developed ambition, and that will never go away as long as we have each other. Lastly, the most memorable experience during this academy for me was the OC spray day. As you can imagine, through all the fiery pain and reactivations we experienced we looked out for one another. The amount of care and empathy that was shown opened up my eyes to how much Class 518 means to me. By helping each other as if we grew up together like brothers and sisters, we truly became a family.

The Judicial Branch's core values are known as the Four Pillars of Excellence – Fairness, Integrity, Respect, and Professionalism. The instructors did a great job in displaying fairness to all of us since the first day we were in training. They held us as individuals to a higher standard, being tough on us in order to create a level of thick skin so that we would develop character within ourselves and to prepare us for the real world experiences we will have out in the field. Throughout the academy we consistently heard the term “integrity,” to do what is right even when no one is around or looking, and we held each other personally accountable to that standard every day. Whether it was making sure our classmates were studying every day for the next quiz or putting forth their best effort during physical training, we held each other responsible. The notion of respect resonates with us all. We naturally have developed more respect for ourselves, each other, and our Lieutenants for what they have shared with us, taught us, and the experiences we have undergone in the entirety of this academy. Finally, professionalism – professionalism is incorporated into our lives at the academy daily by the way we represent ourselves, our behavior, and our appearance. This includes presenting ourselves with shined shoes and making sure everything is in place on our duty belt to doing our due

diligence and not being complacent. We have seen it in ourselves, our Lieutenants, and in this academy.

It has been a long 19 weeks academically, physically, and mentally, but we're here and we are graduating. I want to thank my fellow classmates, our Lieutenants, and our loved ones for all the hard work, struggles, and challenges you have faced and we have faced. This truly was an unforgettable experience. Now it is time for us to do what we were meant to do. Stay safe, everyone, and as we in Class 518 like to say, "We've got your 6."

Thank you.